

707.
A
S E R M O N

Preached at

P I N N E R S - H A L L,

On occasion of the

D E A T H

Of the late Reverend

JAMES FOSTER, D. D.

Who departed this Life Nov. 5, 1753.

W I T H

Memoirs of his LIFE and CHARACTER.

By *CALEB FLEMING*.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. PAYNE, at *Pope's-head* in *Pater-noster*
Row; and R. WHITWORTH at the *Feathers* in the
Poultry; 1753. (Pr. 6d.)

A
SERMON

Preached at
ST. MARY'S-HALL,

On occasion of the

DEATH



BY
JAMES F. D. B.

W. B. D. B.

WITH

Notes of the Sermon and Character

of the deceased

By the Rev. J. F. D. B.

London: Printed by J. F. D. B.

1845.

Price 1s.

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1845.

TO THE
S O C I E T Y

who meet

on Lord's Day mornings,

At

P I N N E R S H A L L:

the following funeral Discourse,
occasioned by the death of their late Pastor,
preached and published at their request,

is inscribed :

by their affectionate,

humble servant,

*Hoxton-Square,
Nov. 24, 1753.*

Caleb Fleming.

[REDACTED]

TO THE
SOCIETY

on James Day morning

P. W. N. E. H. A. L. D.



presented by the Society of Antiquaries
to the Society of Antiquaries

London

by the Society of Antiquaries

James Day

Gift of James

James Day

ACT. xi. 23, 24.

Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they wou'd cleave to the Lord, for HE WAS A GOOD MAN, AND FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND OF FAITH; and much people were added to the Lord.

A CELEBRATED *Divine* observes from these words, "that there is nothing in nature more amiable than a truly good man, whose principal business and highest pleasure is to make men easy here and happy forever. For altho' other qualifications have their value, such as knowledge, sagacity and penetration, abilities for the atchievement of great actions which would command admiration; yet, of all characters, that of *goodness* is most venerable and lovely: and has, in it's similitude the nearest approach

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to divinity." * Hence BARNABAS is spoken of as *a good man*, &c. the *Philanthropy*, the fervent desire he had of promoting the weal of mankind by the spread of the gospel, occasioned St. LUKE to give him this character. —

THIS historian furnisheth us with extensive views of him in his various employment, as an *Evangelist*, which will determine the propriety of his personal character. When we have taken a survey of *Barnabas*, we may indulge ourselves in an accomodation. After this, make some practical reflections.

BARNABAS was a *Levite*, and of the country of *Cyprus*, who was one of them that sold their lands, and brought the money to the *feet* of the apostles. He was the first person who ventured to introduce *Saul* to the apostles, when all the other disciples were afraid of him. He was sent by the Church at *Jerusalem* to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles at *Antioch*. He brought *Paul* from *Tarsus*. He is employed jointly with him in carrying ALMS to the poor christians in *Judea*, during the famine. They return together to *Antioch*, and are engaged in a farther mission to the Gentiles, and go thro' several countries. They make another return to *Antioch*; and set out thence to *Jerusalem* on a dispute which arose

Act. iv.
36, 37.

Ch. ix.
26.

Ib. xi. 22.
Ver. 26.

Ib. 30.

Ch. xii.
25.

xiii. 2.
xiv. 26.

* Dr. S. Clarke's Sermons, Vol. III. Serm. IX.

arose about the Gentile converts: and carry back a decree in their favour.

xv. 30.

AND altho' a difference had been occasioned between them, on account of the cowardice of *John Mark*, *Barnabas's* Sisters Son, they are again reconciled.

Ch. xiii. :

13. comp

with xv.

29.

A LEARNED ecclesiastical WRITER * has given us very early testimonies in favour of this *Barnabas*, who was held in high veneration among the first christians, as an APOSTOLICAL man. —

1 Cor. ix.

6.

Gal. ii. 9.

WE may, by the *premises* conclude his eminence and importance in the christian church, from his labours; when he saw the grace of God, he was glad; *i. e.* when he saw what effects the Gospel doctrine had had in the numerous assembly of Christians, the *much* people. It should thus seem he was an excellent and very popular preacher: his heart felt the vast, the infinite moment of *truth* and *grace*, as appears by the *joy* he had upon its success, and the pathetic exhortation he gave them of *cleaving to the Lord*.

BUT St. LUKE thus accounts for it, *he was a good man*, &c. By *good*, we are undoubtedly authorized to understand, something very distinct from rigid virtue. And as it is but one branch of his character, it will properly denote a particular excellence in

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him.

* See Dr. Lardner's Credibility, Part 11. Vol. I. ch. 1.

him. It is a benignity, a benevolence of spirit that throws a superior lustre on the human character; a quick sensibility and compassionate sympathy is intended, which gave him such a prompt disposition to communicate ease, light and joy.—This had its rise in an unlimited, unconfined generosity of nature, that considers mankind as all of one blood, the production, the offspring of God, and as universally his care. St. PAUL has this same distinction, *scarcely for a RIGHTEOUS man will one die, yet peradventure for a GOOD man some would even dare to die.*

Rom. v.
7.

BARNABAS appears to have been thus distinguished from most of the *Evangelists*, who were cramped in the fetters of *jewish* prejudices, *and would preach the WORD to none but Jews only.* And yet, these with their prejudices had their virtues. But *Barnabas* was quite *catholic* and so far from envying, that we find him rejoicing at the Grace of God on the Gentiles; when he saw them included in the divine scheme of mercy he was glad, *for he was a good man*; and besides this, *full of the Holy Spirit.*

Act. xi.
19.

DOUBTLESS, this will include the miraculous gifts; sometimes spoken of under terms of personality; sometimes it is put for the Gospel itself, and at other times for the moral effects of the Gospel on the hearts of men. When we conceive of it as importing the

extraordinary gifts, we view *Barnabas* as well qualified to support the doctrine he taught, of God's having made Jesus both LORD and CHRIST; since the miracles he wrought in his name did demonstrate that truth. And because these divine abilities of relieving the wretched and miserable, were emphatically expressive of adorable goodness!

IF we apply the terms, *Holy Spirit*, to the Gospel scheme, it would then import, his large and extensive acquaintance with its truth and grace, qualified, by *inspiration*, for delivering the doctrine of Jesus so as to best suit the capacity and condition of his audience. And this is no singular sense of the *Holy Spirit*; for our Lord says, *my words they are Spirit, and they are life*. And St. Paul distinguishes the Gospel dispensation from the ^{Joh. vi.} 63.

Mosaic, by the terms *Spirit* and *letter*: and ^{2 Cor. iii.} and very frequently the Gospel is so described. ^{Joh. iii.}

WHEN the sacred writers have occasion to speak of the moral influences and ^{5, 6, 8.} ^{Rom. vii.} 6. effects of this divine scheme, nothing is more common than the term *Spirit*, or the *fruits* of the Spirit. And in truth these virtues, the brightest ornament of the christian, were in their full strength and vigor, ready to express themselves on every occasion which was given to this evangelist.

BESIDES these, *he was full of faith*.

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THIS primarily has reference to the persuasion he had of the truth of the Gospel, considered as a system of *divine love*, full of great and precious promises. Motives and inducements to a steady adherence to its doctrines and morals. This *faith* supposed a correspondence in his spirit and life with the genius of the Gospel. His faith was not a lifeless, inactive, unmeaning principle; but had its proportionate virtue and efficacy on *all* his temper, aim and action. His whole deportment bore testimony to his faith. No wonder with all these qualifications he was popular; no wonder he was successful. —

THIS shall suffice for the view proposed to be taken of *Barnabas*. —

YOU will now indulge me in the *acommodation*.

I KNOW many excellent men are averse to ones dwelling much on characters in *funeral discourses*. And where there is danger of dissimulation and flattery, there is both prudence and safety in the caution. — But who must I flatter? — the dead. — For what purpose? — the living. — Who are they? — You have had the opportunity of a near acquaintance, and critical knowledge of the deceased; the attempt would be *vain* to impose upon you — and worse than vain in exposing myself. And as by adulation I can have nothing to hope from his friends, none will
once

once suspect my courting the good graces of his enemies. —

AND yet, such was the conspicuous condition of the late *Reverend* Dr. JAMES FOSTER, that no man in his day has been more extensively admired and reproached, revered and reviled. —

AS you of this Church have appointed me to this service, in justice to you and the public, I am under the *necessity* of dwelling more largely on his character, and would

1. GIVE you some significant strictures of his life.

2. SEE what *accommodation* his personal character will have to that of BARNABAS.

THE information of some worthy Gentlemen, enables me to say of him the following things.

“ HE was born at *Exeter* Sep. 16. 1697. His Grandfather was a Clergyman at *Kettering* in *Northamptonshire*. His Father was educated by a dissenting Uncle, and was himself a dissenter ; and by Trade a *Tucker*, or FULLER in *Exon*. His Mother esteemed one of the best of women.

AT *five* years of age he was put to the *Free-School* at *Exeter*, and had his Grammar learning under Mr. *Thorpe* : who discovered in him such a genius, that he boasted of him as the glory of his school. Here his intimacy

cy commenced with Dr. CONYBEARE, the present Bishop of *Bristol*.

THENCE he was removed to an Academy in the same city, kept by the Reverend Mr. JOSEPH HALLET senior; and with whom he finished his studies: * Here he was admired by his *Tutor* and fellow students, as having natural abilities superior to most, a quick apprehension, a solid judgment, a happy memory, a free commanding elocution. In his public exercises, his thoughts were clear, his talents for argumentation great, his modesty and integrity remarkable; and for the strictness of his piety, the candour of his spirit, the tenderness and benevolence of his heart, he was highly esteemed. From his first coming to the academy he had a sovereign contempt of *human authority*, in all matters of religious opinion, faith and practice. Nothing would convince him short of reason and argument.

HE began to preach at the age of twenty years and six months, in the year 1718. Soon after which a storm was gathering, and a scandalous attempt making to *impose* articles of faith. So little did *protestant dissenters* understand their own professed principles.—His ministerial labours about the country had great acceptance; and he was in high esteem with many

* This learning he had *gratis*, which he always thankfully acknowledged.

many ; but with none more than with that most excellent persecuted *Divine* Mr. JAMES PIERCE. — Clamours ran high against him, and he was prevailed upon to accept of an invitation to *Melborne* in *Somersetshire* ; where he continued till some of his hearers, who had caught the common infection, made the place *uneasy* to him. So that he removed to the Reverend Mr. NICHOLAS BILLINGSLEY's at *Ashwick*, under the mountains of *Mendip* ; where he began an intimacy with the Reverend Mr. STODDON. Here he preached to two poor, plain congregations, one at *Colesford*, the other at *Wookey* near *Wells* ; both of which together did not raise him more than the yearly salary of £15. yet here he retained great chearfulness, and pursued his studies with close application. “ His chief view, says a worthy divine who knew him well, was, to maintain his own integrity, and promote the honour of his great Lord ; bearing difficulties with a rational firmness, and calm submission to the divine will.” I should conclude by the dates, that here he wrote his celebrated *Essay on fundamentals*, and likewise his *Sermon on the resurrection of Christ proved and vindicated* ; for they were published in 1720.

THESE pieces raised him a large number of enemies ; the poisoned arrows of detraction and calumny flew thick at him. — He re-

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moves to *Trowbridge*, where he boarded with Mr. *Norman*, a reputable Glover. Here his congregation did not consist ordinarily of more than 20 or 30 persons, and they of the *presbyterian* denomination. And, although he was convinced by reading Dr. *GALE*, that baptism by immersion was most proper; and accordingly was that way baptized in *London*, this made no difference at all between him and his people.—However, so very insufficient were his finances for his support in this place, that he had thoughts of quitting the ministry, and betaking himself to some *secular employment* *.

BUT divine providence designing him for more public services, raised him up a friend in ROBERT HOULTON, *Esq*; who took him into his house as his chaplain, and treated him with much humanity. A virulent pamphlet, supposed to be written by a *Clergyman*, falls foul both on his *Essay* and *Patron*; putting the latter under a curse for taking him into his house, and bidding him *God-speed*.
He

* His refusing to *starve*, was no indication of his want of cheerfulness; and his chusing rather to have learnt the trade of Mr. *Norman*, than seek for succour in the Establishment, is an early instance of his steadiness in the principles of non-conformity; of which he gave later testimonies in declining the large offer made him by Dr. RUNDAL, bishop of *Derry*.

(11.)

He himself is called, a *deceiver* and *anti-christ*. —

IN the year 1724. he was chosen to succeed the Reverend Dr. GALE at *Barbican*; and was *July* 1st. ordained *co-pastor* with the Reverend Mr. JOSEPH BURROUGHS, with whom he laboured above 20 years.

IN 1731. he published his valuable defence of christianity, against TINDAL; of which *Tindal* always spoke with great regard.

AND in the year 1744. he was chosen to succeed the judicious and amiable Dr. JEREMIAH HUNT, in the pastoral charge of the independent church of *Pinner's-Hall*. Here he preached his first Sermon *January* 6. 1745.

IN *December* 1748. the university of *Aberdeen* conferred on him the degree of *Dr. in Divinity*. What opinion the *Scotch* Divines had of his merit may be seen in the letters below*.

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* That from the *Principal*, THOMAS BLACKWELL, L. U. D. [known in the learned world and justly admired for his *Life of Homer*, and his *Court of Augustus*,] runs thus, “ I rejoice in an opportunity of shewing my regard for your person and character. For this end, I chose, that a Diploma creating Mr. *Foster*, Dr. of Divinity, should be the first deed and instrument I should do and sign as *principal* of this University. — It is the AMIABLE character, to which I have there attempted to do some justice. —

Marischal College,
Aberdeen, Dec. 8, 1748.

I MUST now carry your eye a little backward. —

HIS attendances on *Lord KILMARNOCK* *August* 1746. are thought by those who lived with him, to have made too deep an impression on his tender, sympathizing spirit. An abate-

Professor DAVID FORDYCE writes thus, of the 15th following, “ we beg you will be so good as to accept of the Diploma, as a small mark of the sincere veneration we have for you, and of the sense we entertain of the eminent services you have done the cause of liberty, religion, and virtue by your writings as well as public instructions.”

In another from the same, the date torn off, which answers one of Mr. *Foster's* of the 26th of *November*, 1748, and in which he appears to have refused the *Diploma*, the professor says, “ I am glad that by our dispatch of what ought to have been dispatched long ago, we prevented Mr. *Foster's* declining what so well becomes him to receive, and us to confer. I assure you sincerely, we rather seek to reflect honour on ourselves than to do you honour, by rightly placing the *academical Dignity*, the principal value of which is the being at once highly merited and entirely unsolicited. Our society mean by the just compliment inserted in the body of the *Diploma*, * rather to express their esteem of the *modest preacher*, than to do full justice to his character.---For my part, Sir, it gives me a sincere pleasure to have contributed my small mite to do justice to the merit of one, who,---has so often contributed to exalt my devotion, and confirm my attachment to virtue.”

* —Eaq; mente Virum veré egregium JACOBUM FOSTER, dignum Evangelio Ministrum Ingenio, Doctrina Eloquentiâ insignem, Virtutis ac Veritatis Amicum, Libertatis, tam civilis quam christianæ Vindicem, Vitæque quam scriptis, probatissimis licet, clariorem, insigni Honoris titulo promeritis decorare volentes, S. S. Theologiae Doctorem creavimus, —

abatement of his vivacity was henceforward discernible till the year 1750. when in *April* he was visited with a violent disorder, of which he never thoroughly recovered; though he preached as often as he had an ability till *January* the 5th, 1752. Three days after he had another shock: ever since which, though with some intervals of mitigation, his disorders have been too moving for any particular description. More generally I would observe of them, that they were somewhat of the *paralytic* kind. His intellectual abilities were greatly impaired; especially for the last twenty-two months. It is observable he never once discovered in his most sensible seasons of reflection, any the least uneasiness with his theological system; but to the last spoke with great dissatisfaction of the narrow and confined *schemes* of the divine mercy. — Ten or eleven days before he finished, a dead palsy struck his right side; but he remained sensible, and much more calm, even till he breathed his last, which was on the 5th day of this current month *November*; when the wise and good Sovereign of life appointed his deliverance, when he arrived in the *port* of rest and peace, and landed safe on the blissful shore of immortality. —

As to his other Works.

THEY are all generally known and approved. His Tracts on *heresy* against Dr. STEBBING lost him no reputation. His funeral Sermons are several. As for Mr. WILKES, the Reverend Mr. ASHWORTH; and for that venerable confessor the Reverend Mr. THOMAS EMLYN; also his four Volumes of Sermons. His account of Lord *Kilmarnock*; which drew out the pointings of ill-nature and bitterness towards him from angry pens; but reflected more infamy on the Authors themselves. His two Volumes of *Discourses on natural religion and social virtue*, which had TWO THOUSAND Subscribers! a testimony of public esteem, perhaps no other *Divine* can boast; yet this last effort of his abilities, proved too much for his constitution, and he sunk under these his labours. His *works* are translated into foreign languages; and he is, by his *writings* doing honour to his country throughout distant kingdoms and empires.

HIS *popular pulpit-talents* were very rare and extraordinary. The first *eclat* given him, which threw him on the wings of fame, was by a PHYSICIAN of rank and eminence, held in great esteem in this city, who happening to pass by the house where he was preach-

preaching, standing up for shelter from the rain, heard a few sentences, and was charmed, went in, staid the whole time of the Service; and upon all occasions spoke of him with emphatical esteem as a *Preacher* *

BUT the *Lord's-day evening Lecture*, begun in 1728, which he carried on at the *Old Jewry* for above twenty years, maintaining the reputation of it throughout, even until his bodily weaknesses obliged him to quit that Service, shewed, beyond all debate, that his *popularity* did exceed any thing yet known among the *Protestant Dissenters*. — Here was a confluence of persons of every rank, station, and quality. *Wits, free-thinkers*, numbers of *Clergy*; who, whilst they gratified their curiosity, had their prepossessions shaken, and their prejudices loosened. And of the *usefulness* and *success* of these

* Another testimony given in favour of Dr. FOSTER's talent in preaching, take from the celebrated *Pope*, in his *Epilogue to the Satyrs*, Dial. I. Lines 131, 132.

“ Let modest FOSTER, if he will, excell
“ Ten Metropolitans in preaching well.”

The unexampled ill-nature of his *Editor* appears in the *note, viz.* This confirms an observation which Mr. *Hobbes* made long ago, that there be very few *Bishops* that act a Sermon so well, as divers Presbyterians and fanatic preachers can do. See *Warburton's* Edit. of *Pope's* works, Vol. IV. p. 299. which note has sunk this annotator even below contempt. —

these *Lectures* he had a large number of written testimonials from unknown, as well as known persons — The flowers of oratory grew here upon the *plant* of divine truth and reason, from which his audience might gather *fruit* of the highest mental taste, and moral complexion. —

AND what gave the finishing strokes of this character, was, that his *popularity* did not rob him of his humility and modesty, nor injure his christianity. He used no delusive arts to bribe the passions, to play with the imagination, and so impose on the understanding. He had no ambiguities, no disguises; but whatever he thought an important truth, he delivered with freedom and without reserve.

This shall suffice as an historical *Epitome* of his life and labours.

II. THERE is a yet nearer accommodation with *Barnabas* in his personal character; for, *he was a good man*. I mean *good*, in the sublime sense of the term; his humanity was illustrious! all who knew him, could not but admire his generous sentiments and compassionate sympathies. The towering ambition of his Soul, appears to have been animated by benevolence. Which *goodness*, or benignity always has a *poverty of spirit* as its basis; *i. e.* a freedom from worldliness:

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For where the sordid, the selfish, the avaritious disposition is found, this goodness is ever a stranger. But his beneficence was so extraordinary, that he never reserved any of his *appointments* for his own future use; but his poor *brethren* in the ministry, the widow, the fatherless, the distressed, were his TREASURY. — And had it not been for the two thousand Subscribers to his *Discourses on natural religion*, &c. he must have died possessed of scarce any property; for among all his objects of compassion, that most remote from consideration was *himself*.

IN this *goodness* of spirit we shall likewise discover the real ground of his POPULARITY. For although his fine genius, his lively imagination had the aid of an uncommon sprightliness and vivacity in his address, as well as the decorations of chosen diction, masterly expression, and sublime idea: yet, the generosity, the godlike benevolence of his spirit ever gave the most captivating TOUCHES in all his compositions! his manly sympathies had in them the *fire*, the *energy*, that so irresistibly charms! — What was selfish, mean, and ungenerous blushed before him; and in this divine imitation of the supreme, essential GOOD, he seemed to have placed his utmost delight and glory.

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He was also full of the holy Spirit.

NOT in the sense of the extraordinary gifts, as was the case with *Barnabas*: not in the sense of modern *Enthusiasts*, who pretend to inspirations, visions, and revelations: No; but in his judicious discernment of the doctrines, spirit, and precepts of the Gospel. He had investigated with so much study, attention, and judgment, the *New Testament writings*, as to discover the simplicity and plainness of their doctrines, the reasonableness of their precepts, the excellence of their example, and the divinity of their spirit. — He despised the systematic jargon of the schools; the absurdity and mystery of human systems, he severed and cut away from the pure and rational instructions of the Gospel. —

HIS clear discernment of the *rights of conscience*, and the superior claims of private judgment, in all matters of faith and worship, might be concluded from all his WORKS. But no where more fully than in his chapter *on the institution and end of civil government*, where he says, “The magistrate’s authority in matters of conscience must be *nothing*, unless it be unlimited and absolute in all instances: to assert which would be to abolish reason, conscience, and integrity altogether; and to exclude the government of
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GOD himself. — To allow the Magistrate right to impose the *minuteſt article* in religion, is directly calculated, and the experience of the world ſhews, that it has no other uſual effect, than to produce ignorance, ſlavery, and miſery. — A *public leading* in religion, has uſually been the bane of knowledge and rational piety; and continues at this day, in almoſt all nations, to be no better than the eſta bliſhment of falſehood and iniquity by a law.” None more clearly ſaw, nor with more ſtrength expoſed the groundleſs claims of implicit faith, and the extravagance of a blind credulity.

HE had very ſadly and very long experienced the effects of bigotry among *proteſtants*; which led him to expoſe indolence, inattention, prejudice, ſenſuality, and ſuperſtition, as the grand ſources of the *corruptions* of chriſtianity, as well as of the deplorable *darkneſs* of human reaſon. — His life and labors did uniformly recommend the beneficial, uſeful *ſpirit* of the Goſpel, in all the divine virtues that are ſocial and perſonal. For he was convinced, the great deſign of *Chriſt's* miniſtrations were moral, *viz.* to promote virtue, and advance the intereſts of morality in the world, — in order that the grace and mercy of GOD may be maniſeſt in the execution of his office, *as head over all things to his Church.*

WOULD you survey his brotherly kindness? " he would have christians be content with the SCRIPTURE-RULE, and unite in affection, though they cannot in opinion. Nothing must be made essential to christianity, but what the Gospel has directly fixed as such; and we should allow the same liberty to others, which we claim for ourselves; because in every such instance, *fancy* and *partiality* being our only guides, we must for ever despair of harmony and peace." See his chapter on *Catholic communion* *.

Do you ask, how he discovered this *spirit* in his own personal behaviour? I would answer, that in the article of BAPTISM, which he thought most properly applicable to the adult, he made it appear that this did not injure his *charity*, nor so much as limit his *brotherly kindness*. Such was his integrity, he followed closely the convictions of his own mind; at the same time preserving a sacred regard to the rights of others who differed from him; — for in his religious, social deportment, he made every prejudice give way, and every passion do homage to *charity*. So full was he of the *holy spirit* — Or, would you survey his piety? His chapters on the *divine perfections*, give you a chart of its fundamentals,

* The Reverend Mr. WILLIAM WHISTON, when dissatisfied with the *Liturgy* of the Church of *England*, chose to join with the church under the *Doctor's* pastoral care.

mentals, as his *offices of devotion* do furnish a sample of the spirit of his piety. And such are the exalted, adoreable sentiments he had of Deity, that even the enemy to *free prayer*, if serious, could not avoid being fervently engaged, whilst he led the public homage.

AGAIN, will you ask, how was he *full of the holy spirit*, in the sense he had of the various branches of moral obligation, respecting the present condition of man? His chapter on the *relative duties*, and his own personal behaviour, in civil, social, and religious life, will give you a satisfactory solution. His civil principles were full of LOYALTY to the present ROYAL FAMILY; an ardent love of his country possessed him, and a mighty advocate he always was for the civil and religious liberties of mankind. He laboured to disseminate principles of public virtue and true patriotism. POPERY and JACOBITISM he thoroughly detested and abhorred.—

HE was zealously desirous to expose all *immorality* and *vice*, as destructive of order, harmony, and peace in society; and as ruining the prosperity of families, and the happiness of individuals.

HE earnestly laboured to impress the rising age with sentiments of honour, decency and virtue; as he knew them to give
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the youth his true glory. And without which, all accomplishments and emoluments leave him in a character and condition shockingly mean and disgraceful.

His concern to lay a good foundation for the institution of youth, appears from his chapter on *Education*.

AND as he was very sensible of the horrid effects of *Bigotry* and *superstition*, he levelled his aim at the demolition of their power and influence. This poured upon him floods of hatred, malice and envy, from numberless zealots; who, not content with giving him the brand of *heresy*, presumed to charge him with *deism* and *infidelity* *. One would have been glad these virulent tongues had been only those of the most abandoned character. But alas! such unchristian censures have issued from the mouths of men, who, by their profession, should have known far better.—However I presume to add, *He was full of faith*.

HEAR

* It would be well if many who use the term *Deist*, by way of reproach, would learn more modesty and good manners, or rather how to do justice to characters. If they mean by it to charge a man with *disbelieving* revelation, if he is one who has a sincere veneration for it, they are immoral and wicked in the defamation; and he whom they defame might as righteously charge them with theft and murder, however innocent they may be of these crimes. — I mention this, because the *calumny* has been often thrown on the *pious Doctor*. — All sincere christians are, in the proper sense of the word, *Deists*. —

HEAR him thus speak of himself, " I have aimed ultimately at the advancement of the glory of Christ, and the exaltation of his divine religion——and I take this opportunity to declare, in an age in which SCEPTICISM prevails to a high degree, that I esteem it an honour to be a *firm believer*; and from devotedness of mind a *preacher* and *public advocate* for the christian institution; and think all those justly chargeable with great baseness, pusillanimity and hypocrisy, who either preach or profess it for the sake of popularity, or any worldly consideration whatsoever, without being themselves real and hearty christians*." This will serve to shew he was a professed BELIEVER in the Gospel scheme.

BUT he was also *full of faith*, as it denotes the influence it had on his spirit and life: he believed firmly the great promises of the *Gospel*, as they respect the providence of God, and his gracious aids of the christian at present; as also the life and happiness which these report as future and eternal. " When a young student called upon him, during those discomposing times in the WEST, who seemed a little dispirited, Mr. FOSTER looking stedfastly in his face, said to him, " What? dost thou think there is no *truth* in

* See his conclusion, Vol. I. p. 269.

in the promises? — *First seek the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added. All things shall work together for good to them that love God, &c."*

IN his extremest difficulties he was cheerful, both when by *Mendip* and at *Trowbridge*; where he had very short allowance.

HIS *faith* in the promises, as they have reference to another state, he had in lively exercise. And in a *lucid* interval, about six weeks before his death, he spoke with great clearness and connection upon those words of the Apostle's; *if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable!* chusing to apply it to his own condition.

HE knew he had preserved an inviolable integrity, and a steady attachment to the interests of truth and liberty: so that under the load of reproach and calumny, his confidence was *on high*; he knew his judge will be his advocate in the face of the whole world. Moreover, all his labors shew, that he understood the great design of christ's mediation to be, *the reconciling men to God*, by promoting virtue, and advancing the interests of truth and goodness in the world. And who will call in question his faith, whose soul was so deeply wounded with the *infidelity* and *scepticism* of the age? —

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THUS far there is an happy similitude between BARNABAS and your deceased pastor.— If any should say, the latter had his imperfections; so had *Barnabas*. He had his partialities and infirmities, as seems evident from his great attachment to *John Mark*.— But whatever they were, either in him, or in our deceased BROTHER, they were such as did consist with the noblest sublime sentiments, and the most exemplary and shining generosity.

REFLECTIONS.

I. **T**O be good, sincerely benevolent, is, in the most eminent and exalted sense, *to be full of the Holy Spirit* — No higher effects are ever once proposed to be wrought on *man* by the Gospel scheme. — He might work miracles, understand all mysteries, and have all knowledge; and yet be a stranger to that generosity and benevolence which are essential to *goodness*.

Too many will fancy they have sundry claims to the favour and protection of Jesus as LORD, whom he will one day openly disown, and totally reject for want of *goodness*. How extremely *perilous* must it then be for any to pour contempt on the *moral* system? And how very wild the opinion of a *justifying faith*, that does not work by *love*, and is not productive of *good works*?

THE faith of the *Enthusiast*, or the faith of the *superstitious*, has productions of an infinitely baser alloy: pride, envy, hatred, malice, inhumanity, flow in the rapid stream of slander, calumny and detraction. — Whereas the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness.

II. HAVE you seen the disabling hand of providence laying aside an instrument melodiously, highly tuned for the sacred services? an object of public veneration! This shou'd humble the pride of man, and discountenance all his vanity; since neither natural nor moral excellencies, cou'd secure from those withdrawals of God's invigorating presence and blessing.

JEALOUSY shou'd be excited, (when such shining abilities and superior goodness have had deep *shades* drawn over them by the hand of heaven,) lest you, in some measure may have unhappily contributed to the *necessity* of the divine procedure. — Ask yourselves, did you lend him your attendance only to *charm the ear*, but wou'd not suffer him to reach or *impress your hearts*? — You are then censured by the voice of the public, which has confessed that *both* these were his talents. * — Such hearers EZEKIEL had; and of whom he sadly complains, — *they heard God's words, but did them not.* — The

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* “ FOSTER, thou only hast the pleasing art,
“ At once to charm the ear, and mend the heart.”

prophet was to them as a lovely song of one that had a skilful, melodious voice.—The effects are no *more*, nor any *better* upon such hearers than from an *Italian opera Song*, or from the thrilling harmony of a musical concert. But—this is not the *end* of God's raising up men so qualified to preside over his household, to give to each his portion in due season.

Ezek.
xxxiii.
31, 32.

You who have improved, (and I hope many of you have, in knowledge and virtue under his ministrations, you shou'd embalm his memory in thanksgivings to God, that ye knew him; with grateful reflections on his labours; and with pious resolutions of adhering with full *purpose of heart unto the Lord*.—to this, did all his endeavours most earnestly exhort you.

III. SINCE superior talents and shining virtues give the *wider scope* to envy, calumny and detraction,—surely we, any of us, may be reconciled to popular censure, and to the rancour of *bigots*, because of our religious sentiments: rejoycing likewise in the assurance, that our *fates* are not to be determined by the prejudices or passions of men, but he who judgeth us, *is the Lord*. Under which persuasion, we shall be able to *bless* them who curse, and *do good* to them who hate or despise us.

See Eccl.
iv. 5.

IV. *Ministers*, in a particular manner, should improve the death of this *good* man, by catching his spirit and enquiring after his God. — Ardently should we cry out, *where is the Lord*
God

God of Elijah? — *How, when, and where* shall we experience a like presence with us? Also, a like ardor, zeal, and fervency be found in our spirits and labors? Above all, may we emulate his benevolence and integrity. — May we be utter *strangers* to deceit, dissimulation, and flattery. ready to follow TRUTH, under her divine lead, however she may expose us. — In a word, may we have wisdom and fortitude to copy closely after this *fair* example. To this purpose, brethren, PRAY FOR US. — Pray that the cause of *religion, virtue, truth,* and *liberty,* may not languish, nor their interests suffer under the hands of us his survivors. — But that we also may be instrumental in turning many to righteousness.

I SHALL conclude with an exhortation to you of this CHURCH, to which the deceased stood in a pastoral relation. — Do him the justice, “to remember he was one who watched for your souls, desirous to give an account of them with joy: in doing so, you will have the truest compassion on yourselves; for should he do it with grief, it will be very unprofitable to you. —

BE not then slothful: but followers of him and of your former amiable pastor, who through faith and patience are now both of them inheriting the promises.

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